

Two major railroads also traverse the county. The Burlington Northern/Santa Fe line enters the county near MacArthur lake follows Deep Creek and exits at the Montana border along the Kootenai River. The Spokane International line enters the county near MacArthur lake and exits at Eastport, following Deep Creek, the Kootenai River and the Moyie River. Possible ignitions include those from hot carbon particles in the diesel exhaust, sparks from wheels hitting track joints, and from derailment accidents.

A Bonneville Power System electric transmission line comes into the county from the Montana line, follows the Kootenai River, then follows Deep Creek south to the county line. Other primary electrical distribution lines extend out from Bonners Ferry to all parts of the urban interface in the county. Major wind events causing live power lines to fall is the primary concern for ignitions. These wind events are often associated with dry cold fronts which hit the county in early to late fall, a time when forest fuels are most easily ignited.

For the most part, all of these ignition corridors are near the zones where the most dense grouping of high risk residences exists.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND EDUCATION

As the field assessment phase was occurring, the IFM team was meeting with the various fire departments in Boundary County, the many agencies that have fire protection obligations in the county, agencies that have access to grant funds and the public in general. The purpose of the meetings was to be sure that the various cooperators were aware of our process, and that the public was aware that funds were likely to be available to reduce risk of fire damage to their property.

News articles were encouraged prior to the major public meeting, in hopes that a broad spectrum of home owners in the county would attend and become aware of the county plans. Plans were laid to have a “Fire-Safe” presence at the Boundary County Fair, in order to answer questions and to extend public awareness of this project.

A total of 5 meetings were held. Four of the meetings were primarily with fire departments and interested or cooperating agencies. One meeting was held primarily for the general public. Attendees at each meeting were asked to sign in. Most did sign in, although a few did not.

The meeting format was structured to assure that all attendees were aware of the background nationally, and within the state of Idaho, that has driven the issue of wildland/urban interface fire risk. The relationship of this work Boundary County’s Fire Mitigation Plan to the National Fire Plan was explained.

The process being used by the IFM team was explained, so that those in attendance would gain some knowledge of important factors we were considering. The expected way that fuel-treatment for mitigation of fire risk would be conducted was discussed. Picture examples of fuel mitigation work in Kootenai County were shown.

We always asked for leads to persons who might want to do contractual fuel treatment work. We also sought advice as to how to increase public awareness that the project was underway.

The initial meeting was held April 21, 2003 at the City of Bonners Ferry fire hall. The city fire department and interested agency personnel were invited. This meeting was attended by:

- 5 employees of the Bonners Ferry Ranger District, USFS
- 2 members of the Bonners Ferry Fire Department
- 2 employees of Idaho Department of Lands
- 1 employee of the City of Bonners Ferry
- 1 from Boundary County Emergency Services
- 4 representatives of IFM.

On April 29, 2003 a meeting was held with North Bench and Hall Mountain volunteer fire departments, at the 3-mile fire hall. Attendees included:

- 4 members of North Bench VFD
- 1 from BLM
- 1 from IDL
- 1 from USFS
- 1 from Boundary County Emergency Services
- 1 resident
- 3 from the IFM team.

On May 1, the team met with the Naples VFD and Paradise Valley VFD at the Paradise Valley Cow Creek Station. In attendance were:

- 2 members of Naples VFD
- 3 members of Paradise Valley VFD
- 1 from USFS
- 1 from IDL
- 1 from LP Corp
- 1 from Boundary County Emergency Services
- 3 from IFM

On May 5, 2003 a meeting with Moyie Springs and Curley Creek VFD's was held at the Moyie Springs City Hall. In attendance were:

- 1 member of Hall Mtn. VFD
- 8 members of Moyie VFD
- 4 members of Curley Cr. VFD
- 1 from City of Bonners Ferry
- 1 from Boundary County Emergency Services
- 1 from BLM
- 1 from USFWS
- 3 from IFM

A public meeting was held on June 25, 2003 at the City of Bonners Ferry fire hall. There were 24 people in attendance, including some agency people and many individual homeowners. The field assessment and results of that assessment were displayed to the group.

Pictures of before/after fuel treatment operations in Kootenai County were shown to illustrate the types of work that is anticipated in Boundary County.

In addition this group was invited to share names of potential fuel mitigation contractors. They were invited to sign up if they were interested in having their homes evaluated for fire risk.